

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF
WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND

1. Call to order: 4:30 p.m. Regular Meeting April 18, 2013 at the Woonsocket Housing Authority, 679 Social Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Sally Anthony
Commissioner Charles Baldelli
Commissioner Roger Bouchard
Commissioner Theresa Corbeille
Commissioner Bernadette Rochefort

Robert Kulik, Executive Director
Deputy Director, Duncan Speel
Commissioner Janet Lemieux - Absent
Attorney Michael Murphy

2. Election of Chair

Secretary asked for nominations for Chairperson. Commissioner Baldelli nominated David Lahousse. Commissioner Anthony seconded the nomination.

The Secretary asked twice for other nominations for Chairperson. Hearing none, the Secretary closed the nominations.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken on the nomination of David Lahousse as Chairman. The following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Commissioner Lahousse
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille
Commissioner Rochefort

3. Election of Vice Chair

The Chairman asked for nominations for Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Baldelli nominated Bernadette Rochefort. Commissioner Anthony seconded the nomination.

The Chairman asked twice for other nominations. Hearing none, the Chairman closed the nominations.

There was no further discussion. The Board unanimously voted to approve the nomination of Bernadette Rochefort as Vice Chairwoman.

3. Good and Welfare for the Audience – None

4. Good and Welfare for the Commissioners

Commissioner Anthony requested that WHA employee contact information be added to the demographics information that was distributed. The Director indicated that we would distribute that information at the May meeting.

Commissioner Baldelli commended the Executive Director and his staff for his insight in developing a partially occupied building into a state-of-the-art, low-income assisted living facility. Well done.

The Director spoke, commending Deputy Speel, Chairman Lahousse, former Vice Chairwoman Cote, former Commissioners Laliberte, Frappier and Remillard, and Procurement Officer Susan Castrataro for all of their assistance and support in bringing this dream to fruition.

The Chairman thanked the Board for the Chairmanship. He encouraged the Board to ask questions and get involved. He noted how proud he is of all that the Housing Authority does.

4. Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to accept the minutes for the regular meeting of March 21, 2013, and the minutes of the Executive Session of March 21, 2013. A motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort and seconded by Chairman Lahousse.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli -Recused
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille

5. Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to accept the bills paid for the month of March 2013. A motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort and seconded by Chairman Lahousse.

Commissioner Anthony asked how many vehicles the WHA owns; the listing of payments to the Division of Motor Vehicles looks like there may be 24. The Director indicated that he would clarify those line items.

Commissioner Anthony asked about the payment for inspections. The Director explained that the WHA inspects the current living situation of each prospective resident, as well as Section 8 properties on an annual basis; the inspectors are paid per inspection.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille

6. Communications and Interest of the Authority

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to receive and place on file the Communications and Interest of the Authority, A - C. A motion was made by Commissioner Corbeille and seconded by Chairman Lahousse.

Deputy Speel discussed the communication from the DOT regarding the crosswalk in front of Kennedy Manor. There have been meetings with City officials and the Chief of Police to try to determine the safest solution to this dangerous crossway. Currently things are at a stalemate. There is conflict over who would pay for a safety survey. The City is accusing the WHA of refusing to pay; the WHA is saying they need to go out for bid for the study, not that they will not pay. The Director added that back in August he called the Mayor's office to say that the WHA would like to be involved in the decision making process if

there is a possibility that the crosswalk is going to be moved. The Director was told that the decision had already been made. The Chairman made contact with the City and was told that the City wants to move the crosswalk to the intersection. There was one meeting which Representative Baldelli-Hunt participated in and apparently the Mayor did not approve of her intervention so there have been no subsequent meetings. Over a year later, because of politics, nothing has happened. Commissioner Rochefort added that it is also hazardous to try to get out of the parking lot in a vehicle. Commissioner Bouchard suggested that Clinton Street is a state road and maybe we should be dealing with the State, not the City. The Director said he would look into that. There was some further discussion amongst the Commissioners. Commissioner Baldelli asked for the question to be moved.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille

7. Report of the Secretary

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to accept and place on file, the report of the Secretary, for purposes of discussion. A motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort and seconded by Commissioner Baldelli.

The Director submitted his report as written. He provided an update on the Assisted Living facility stating that the WHA has passed all inspections and is ready to go. Potential residents are being recertified to be within the 30-day window. Tonight the Board will get to tour the facility. The Director indicated that there will be an Open House in the near future.

The Director indicated that at present the WHA is okay financially. He has cut several services to staff offices (bottled water, Shred-It, etc.), but at this time is not laying off employees as some other housing authorities have had to.

There was some discussion regarding the fact that St. Germain Manor Assisted Living is the first low-income assisted living facility at any public housing agency in the country, and how the financial qualifications are the same as when applying for traditional public housing. We are not competing with other assisted living

facilities because our residents would not financially qualify for traditional high-cost assisted living.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille

7A. Report of the Deputy Director

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to receive and place on file, the report of the Deputy, for purposes of discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

The Deputy submitted his report as written, highlighting Veteran’s Memorial renovations demolition is underway. The Deputy gave a brief overview of the renovations using the architects plans, explaining the bump-outs of the kitchen and laundry areas, the fire code update, and the fact that these new units will be lead free. The Choice Neighborhoods has advertised some positions for consultants to conduct surveys. The Deputy noted the nutrition program that Brown University is running at the family developments.

There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille

The Director spoke briefly about the trash issue in the City. He noted that he is in the process of surveying other housing authorities to see how they handle rubbish

removal for their properties. He said the WHA is willing to pay its fair share. The WHA was not aware that it was covered under the City's cap and the City has been paying part of our share. The Director will protect the Authority through legal means before entering into an agreement with the City. Vice Chairwoman Rochefort asked if HUD will fund us for this; the Director said no, the WHA will have to find the money. The Deputy said the WHA is trying to maintain its residential rate status, not become classified as commercial, which has a much higher rate. Commissioner Bouchard confirmed with the Director that going forward the WHA would pay its share, and asked how far back the WHA would reimburse the City. The Director stated that the housing authority could never afford to go back 5 or 10 years. Commissioner Bouchard stated that it may be the Commissioners' decision as that is what they are there for, to set policy. Commissioner Bouchard stated that as a Woonsocket resident he wears two hats, and he does not always wear his Housing Authority hat.

7B. Reports of Direct Staff, Legal and Financial

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to receive and place on file, the reports of Direct Staff, Legal and Financial. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Chairman Lahousse.

Commissioner Baldelli questioned the WHA's accepting of Section 8 vouchers from other agencies. He asked for a breakdown of the family composition for those voucher holders. The Director said he would set up a meeting with the Section 8 department so that Commissioner Baldelli could get the information first hand. Commissioner Bouchard indicated that he would like to be a part of that meeting, however, if he is going to be told that HUD will not let us put a cap on it, he will not go. He asked if Commissioners have any control over the number of vouchers, which are just a financial drain on the community in so many respects. The Director disagreed with Commissioner Bouchard stating that the landlords are making rents and paying taxes. Commissioner Baldelli said he would like a meeting with the Section 8 department. The Finance Director commented that the WHA has promised HUD that it will not grow its Section 8 program this year.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Corbeille

8. Report of Committees – None

9. Unfinished Business - None

10. New Business - None

11. Adjournment

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort at 5:33 p.m.

Roll call vote was unanimous.

Robert Kulik, Executive Director